

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT:PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA ON CRANSTON-BAKER AND CSCE OVERSIGHT
(COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS)

1. SUMMARY. A TASS DESCRIPTION OF THE CRANSTON-BAKER
RESOLUTION WHICH APPEARED IN THE WEEKEND SOVIET PRESS CARE-
FULLY BALANCED PRAISE FOR THE "POSITIVE ASPECTS" OF THE
RESOLUTION WITH CRITICISM OF PROVISIONS CALLING FOR A STRONG
U.S. MILITARY POSITION AND OF AMENDMENTS INTERFERING
(ACCORDING TO TASS) IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS. PRAVDA ON
MAY 8 ALSO FOUND FURTHER CAUSE TO CRITICIZE CONGRESS. THAT
PAPER'S AUTHORITATIVE INTERNATIONAL WEEK COMMENTARY SAYS
THAT EFFORTS TO SET UP A CONGRESSIONAL WATCHDOG COMMITTEE TO OVER-
SEE IMPLEMENTATION OF CSCE ARE IN REALITY AIMED AT DIS-
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CREDITING CSCE. THE MEDIA CRITICISM OF THE CRANSTON-

BAKER RESOLUTION IS GENERALLY TACTFULLY PUT, WHILE THAT OF THE PLANS FOR A CSCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IS A BIT BLUNTER. BOTH CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS CREATE SOMETHING OF A DILEMMA FOR SOVIET COMMENTATORS, FOR CONGRESS DURING PAST MONTHS HAS BEEN PORTRAYED AS ONE OF THE STAUNCHEST SUPPORTERS OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. IZVESTIYA MAY 7 AND PRAVDA THE FOLLOWING DAY CARRIED THE FULLEST REPORT TO APPEAR SO FAR IN THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE CRANSTON-BAKER RESOLUTION. EARLIER PRESS REPORTS ON THE RESOLUTION DURING PAST MONTHS HAD BEEN CAREFULLY POSITIVE, WITH STRESS ON ARMS CONTROL AND SALT ASPECTS. SOVIET EXPECTATIONS--OR AT LEAST HOPES -- WERE CLEARLY THAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME AN UNAMBIGUOUS AND UNCONDITIONAL STATEMENT SUPPORTING IMPROVED US-SOVIET RELATIONS.

3. DISAPPOINTMENT IS THEREFORE OBVIOUS IN THIS LATEST TASS ASSESSEMENT OF THE RESOLUTION. IT CAREFULLY RECOUNTS THE RESOLUTIONS "POSITIVE ASPECTS", BUT ALSO RELUCTANTLY NOTES "NEGATIVE ASPECTS." ON THE POSITIVE SIDE IT CITES RECOGNITION THAT THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS A "CENTRAL ASPECT" OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. IT QUOTES BRIEF FAVORABLE EXCERPTS FROM THE RESOLUTION REGARDING NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS WITH THE USSR, INCLUDING AN AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD IMPLEMENT THE VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, HOWEVER, THE TASS REPORT DISAPPROVES OF THE RESOLUTION'S CALL FOR THE U.S. TO REMAIN "INDISPUTABLY STRONG" MILITARILY. LEAVING UNTIL LAST WHAT SURELY MUST BE THE MOST OFFENSIVE PORTIONS FOR THE SOVIET UNION--THOSE ON SOVIET CONTROL OF THE BALTIC STATES--THE REPORT STATES ONLY THAT "UNDER PRESSURE FROM CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES, A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS WERE ALSO INTRODUCED IN THE RESOLUTION WHICH MAKE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS DEPENDENT UPON A SERIES OF CONDITIONS WHICH IN ESSENCE CONSTITUTE INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THUS CONTRADICT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVISIONS OF (CSCE)."

4. PRAVDA'S INTERNATIONAL WEEK MAY 9 ALSO FINDS ILL WINDS BLOWING FROM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AIMED AT "DISCREDITING THE DECISIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED AT HELSINKI." THESE ATTEMPTS, SAYS PRAVDA, PROCEED WITH "ANTI-SOVIET ACCOMPANIMENT" AIMED AT INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET AFFAIRS. THE BILL BEING DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE

OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CREATE A WATCHDOG COMMITTEE ON
CSCE IMPLEMENTATION CLEARLY FALLS INTO THIS CATEGORY.
PRAVDA ASSERTS.

5. COMMENT: THE SOVIET PRESS REACTION TO THESE
CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS IS STILL FAIRLY CAUTIOUS, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE
MEDIA HERE HAVE REPEATEDLY PORTRAYED CONGRESS IN PAST
MONTHS AS A RELATIVELY STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THE USSR--THOUGH NOTING AT THE SAME TIME THAT SOME
COLD WARRIORS ARE STILL TO BE FOUND IN ITS RANKS. PASSAGE
OF A BILL CREATING A CSCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, HOWEVER, WOULD
PROBABLY LEAVE THE SOVIETS WITH NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE
THAN TO REACT PUBLICLY VERY HARSHLY.
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